



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/639,535	08/16/2000	Edward J. McGunn		3101

7590

06/16/2003

WOOD, PHILLIPS, VANSANTEN, CLARK & MORTIMER
Suite 3800
500 W. Madison Street
Chicago, IL 60661

EXAMINER

FITZGERALD, JOHN P

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3637

DATE MAILED: 06/16/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/639,535

Applicant(s)

MCGUNN ET AL.

Examiner

John P Fitzgerald

Art Unit

3637

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 March 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24,26-31 and 35 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24,26-31 and 35 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 16 August 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-24, 26-31 and 35 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 22 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.
4. Claim 22 recites the limitation "the front opening" in line 3 and the limitations "the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel" in line 12. There is insufficient antecedent basis for these limitations in the claim. Claim 31 recites the limitations "the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel" in line 14, 17, 18, 21 and 22. There is insufficient antecedent basis for these limitations in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. § 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

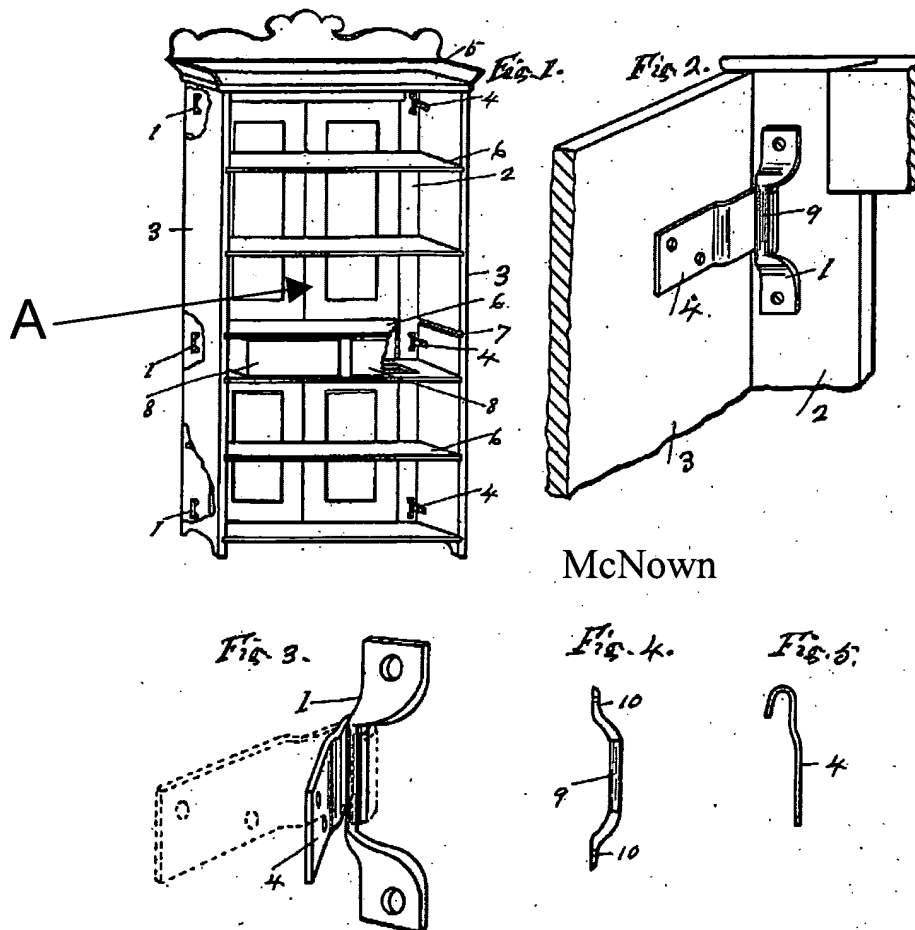
A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

Art Unit: 3637

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

6. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by McNown. McNown discloses a securable enclosure (Figs. 1-5), the securable enclosure having a front opening (A), the securable enclosure comprising: a top panel (5); first and second side panels (3); a rear panel (2), the top panel, first and second side panels, and rear panel being connected to each other with the securable enclosure in an assembled state to bound a storage space accessible through the front opening; a first connector part (1) fixedly attached to one of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel; and a second connector part (4), being a clip body, fixedly attached to another one of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel, the first and second connector parts releasably connected, each to the other, without requiring any additional separate parts to maintain the one and the another of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel together with the securable enclosure in the assembled state, wherein the first and second connector parts are releasable from each other by accessing and repositioning at least one of the first and second connector parts from within the storage space with the securable enclosure in the assembled state, wherein the one and the another of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel and rear panel are fixed together so that the one and the another of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel and rear panel are angled with respect to each other to define an inside corner and an outside corner, and the first and second connector parts are mounted at the inside corner.

Art Unit: 3637



Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 2-4, 8, 9, 15-17 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNown as applied to claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) above, and further in view of Hill. McNown discloses a securable enclosure having all of the elements stated previously, including a plurality of first and second pairs of releasably connected connector parts

Art Unit: 3637

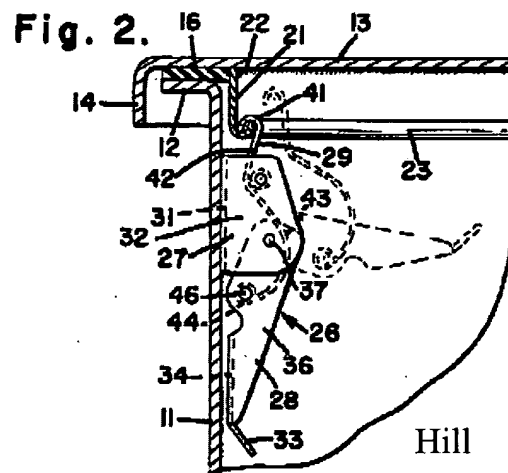
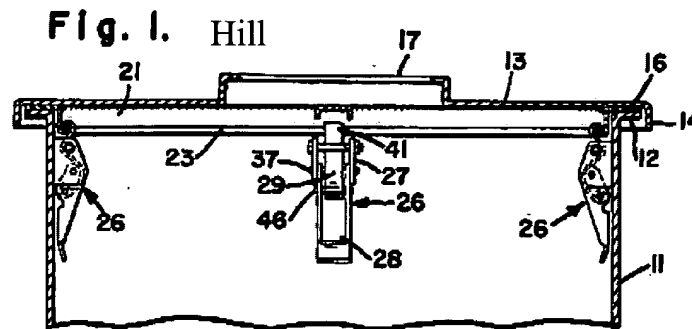
maintaining panels in the assembled state that are only accessible through the front opening, within the storage space of the securable enclosure. McNown does not expressly disclose a securable enclosure wherein the first connector part comprises a clip body and the second connector part comprises a repositionable lock hook that is releasably connectable to the clip body, the another of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel and rear panel having a substantially flat surface to which the second connector part is mounted, the flat surface residing in a reference plane, the repositionable lock hook is pivotably attached to a housing and the housing is pivotable relative to another of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel about an axis that is substantially parallel to the reference plane between a) a first position wherein the repositionable lock hook can be connected to the clip body and b) a second position wherein the repositionable lock hook is urged so as to biasably urge the one and the another of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel against each other; wherein the lock hook is accessible for movement only through the front opening and from within the storage space with the securable enclosure in the assembled state; wherein the top panel is releasably connected to each of the first and second side panels and rear panel through at least first and second pairs of the connector parts provided one each on a) the top panel and b) one of the first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel, the connector parts in the second pair of cooperating connector parts provided one each on c) the top panel and another one of the first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel, the connector parts on the at least first and second pairs of releasable cooperating connector parts being connected, each to the other, without requiring any additional separate parts or fasteners. Hill teaches a securable enclosure (Figs. 1-5) wherein a top panel (13) is releasably connected to a side panel (11) by a plurality of

Art Unit: 3637

first (41) and second (29) connector parts, connected to each other without requiring any additional separate parts; wherein the first connector part comprises a clip body and the second connector part comprises a lock hook that is releasably connectable to the clip body, wherein the side panel has a substantially flat surface to which the second connector part is mounted, the flat surface residing in a reference plane, the repositionable lock hook is pivotably attached to a housing (28) and the housing is pivotable relative to the top panel and side panel about an axis that is substantially parallel to the reference plane between a) first position when the repositionable lock hook can be connected to the clip body and b) a second position wherein the repositionable lock hook is urged so as to biasably urge the top panel and side panel against each other; wherein the housing achieves an overcenter position wherein the housing is maintained in the second position as the housing moves from the first position to the second position; wherein the lock hook is accessible for movement thereof only from within the storage space through an opening (17). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the first and second connector parts acting on the top and side panels as taught by Hill, modifying the first and second connector parts of the securable enclosure disclosed by McNown, thus providing a conveniently engaging connector means that serves as a stiffener for the top panel and exact placement of the top panel is not necessary and hence rapid installation of the top panel is facilitated (Hill: col. 1, lines 30-37). In specific regards to claims 8 and 9, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the first and second connector parts to releasably connect any panel to one another, including the bottom panel to one of the side panels, on the securable enclosure, since it has been held that mere duplication of the essential working parts of

Art Unit: 3637

a device involves only routine skill in the art. *St. Regis Paper Co. v. Bemis Co.*, 193 USPQ 8 (CA7 1977).



9. Claims 5-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNown as applied to claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) above, and further in view of WO 9105128 A1 to Dahlstedt. McNown discloses a securable enclosure having all of the elements stated previously, including a plurality of first and second pairs of releasably connected connector parts maintaining panels in the assembled state that are only accessible through the front opening, within the storage space of the securable enclosure. McNown does not expressly disclose a securable enclosure wherein the securable enclosure further comprises a front frame panel for a closure element and the front frame panel is releasably connected to at least one of the top panel,

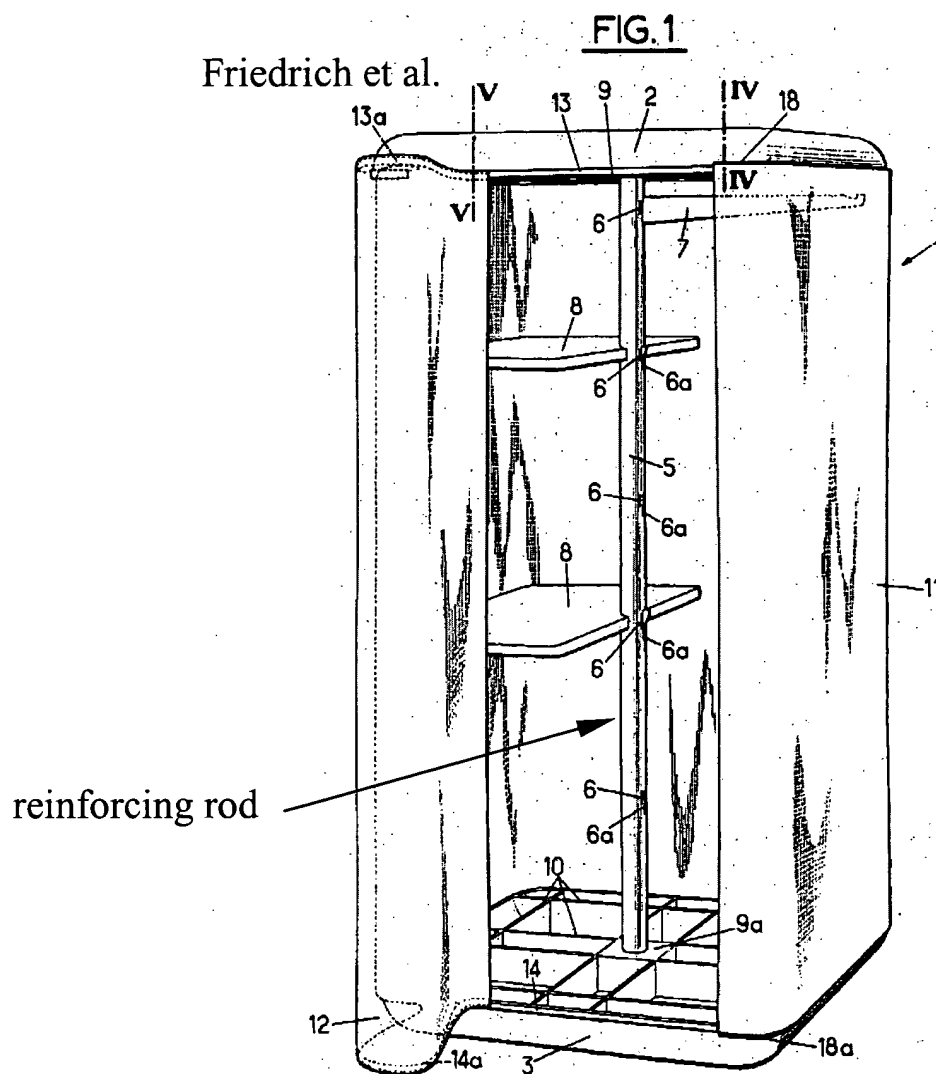
Art Unit: 3637

first side panel, and second side panel through at least a first and second pairs of releasable cooperating connector parts, the connector parts in the first pair of cooperating connector parts provided one each on a) the front frame panel and b) one of the top panel, first side panel, and second side panel, the connector parts in the second pair of cooperating connector parts provided one each on c) the front panel and another one of the top panel, first side panel, and second side panel, the connector parts in the at least first and second pairs of releasable cooperating connector parts being connected, each to the other, without requiring any additional parts; further comprising a closure element that is mounted to the front frame panel for movement between a) an open position wherein the storage space can be accessed through the front opening and b) a closed position. WO 9105128 A1 to Dahlstedt teaches a securable enclosure having a front frame panel (23) being releasably connected to the top (5) and side panels (3, 4); the front frame panel receiving a closure element (WO 9105128 A1 to Dahlstedt: page 13, lines 11-20) that is mounted to the front frame panel for movement between an open position allowing access to a storage space through the front opening and a closed position. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ a front frame panel and a closure element mounted thereon, as taught by WO 9105128 A1 to Dahlstedt to prevent access to the storage space and connectors of the securable enclosure disclosed by McNown, thus providing safe storage of items.

10. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNown as applied to claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) above, and further in view of Friederich et al. McNown discloses a securable enclosure having all of the elements stated previously. McNown does not expressly disclose a securable enclosure wherein the securable enclosure further comprises a bottom panel and a reinforcing rod that extends between the top panel and the bottom panel, the reinforcing rod being spaced from each of the first and second side panels and the rear panel. Friederich et al. teaches a securable enclosure (Figs. 1-11) having a bottom panel (3) and a reinforcing rod (5) that extends between the top panel (2) and the bottom panel, the reinforcing rod being spaced from each of the surrounding side panel walls (11). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ a reinforcing rod extending between the top and bottom panel, as taught by Friedrich et al., modifying the securable enclosure disclosed by McNown et al., thus allowing for the mounting

Art Unit: 3637

of brackets to support shelves (Friedrich et al. col. 1, lines 43-45). Furthermore, it is considered old and well known in the art to provide for reinforcement bars or reinforcement structure to increase the rigidity of a structure.



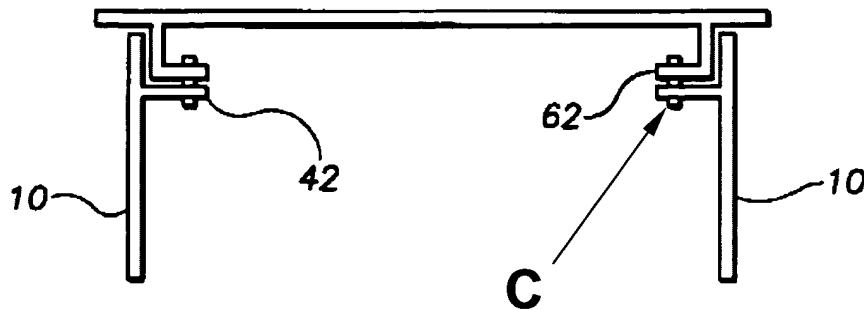
11. Claims 11, 12 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNown as applied to claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) above, and further in view of Marcum. McNown discloses a securable enclosure having all of the elements stated previously, including top, side and rear panels having substantially flat first and second surfaces on which the first and

Art Unit: 3637

second connector parts are mounted thereto. McNown does not expressly disclose a securable enclosure wherein the one of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel substantially first surface includes a first flange with a flat surface that is angularly disposed to the first surface, the another of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel and rear panel second flat surface includes a second flange with a flat surface that is angularly disposed to the second surface, and with the securable enclosure in the assembled state, the flat surface on the first flange is facially abutted to the flat surface on the second flange, wherein at least one of the first and second connector parts extends fully through the first flange to connect the other of the first and second connector parts; wherein the first flat surface is substantially orthogonal to the second flat surface; wherein the first and second flanges each have an opening therethrough to accommodate the first and second connector parts. Marcum teaches a securable enclosure (Figs. 1-8) wherein the top panel (60) has a substantially flat first surface with a first flange (62) with a flat surface that is angularly disposed to the first surface, the side panel having a substantially flat second surface with a second flange (42) with a flat surface angularly disposed to the second surface, and with the securable enclosure in the assembled state, the flat surface on the first flange is facially abutted to the flat surface on the second flange, wherein the first and second flanges each have an opening (44, 54) therethrough to accommodate a connector part (C) connecting the top and side panel flanges to one another. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ flanges one of the top, first side, second side and rear panel having all of the attributes taught by Marcum, modifying the securable enclosure disclosed by McNown, thus providing an easily assembled and dissembled securable enclosure (Marcum: col. 1 line 39 to col. 2, line 27).

FIG. 7B

Marcum



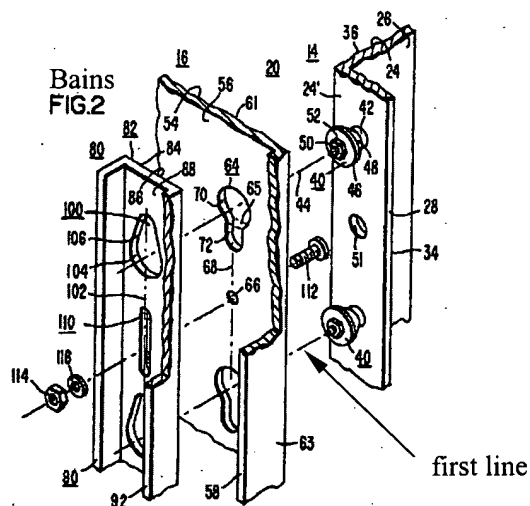
12. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNown and Marcum, as applied to claims 1 and 11 above, and further in view of Hill. McNown and Marcum disclose a securable enclosure having all the elements stated previously. McNown and Marcum do not expressly disclose a securable enclosure wherein the first and second connector parts biasably draw the flat surface on the first and second flanges against one another. Hill teaches a securable enclosure (Figs. 1-5) wherein a top panel (13) is releasably connected to a side panel (11) by a plurality of first (41) and second (29) connector parts, to biasably urge the top panel and side panel against each other. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the first and second connector parts acting on the top and side panels as taught by Hill, modifying the first and second connector parts of the securable enclosure disclosed by McNown and Marcum, thus providing a conveniently engaging connector means that serves as a stiffener for the top panel and exact placement of the top panel is not necessary and hence rapid installation of the top panel is facilitated (Hill: col. 1, lines 30-37).

Art Unit: 3637

13. Claims 18-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNown as applied to claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) above, and further in view of Bains. McNown discloses a securable enclosure having all of the elements stated previously. McNown does not expressly disclose a securable enclosure wherein a first of the top panel, first side panel, and rear panel has a locating post fixed thereon, and another of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and a rear panel has a locating slot thereon which receives the locating post with the securable enclosure in the assembled state; wherein the locating post is fixed on the first side panel; wherein the locating post comprises a neck with an enlarged head on the neck, the enlarged head is moved into the locating slot by moving the first panel in a first direction in a first line with the first and another panels in a first relative position, and the slot is configured so that the enlarged head moved through the slot, shifting of the first panel relative to the another panel transverse to the first line to a second relative position causes the enlarged head to act against the another panel to thereby block movement of the enlarged head out of the slot by movement of the first panel parallel to the first line oppositely to the first direction; a third connector part on the first panel and a fourth connector part on the another panel, the third and fourth connector parts being releasably connectable, each to the other to maintain the first and another panels in the second relative position. Bains teaches a panel joint for a securable enclosure (Figs. 1-8) for first (14) and second (16) panels applicable to both right angle and in-line panel joints wherein the first panel has a locating post (40) fixed thereon comprising a neck (42) with an enlarged head (46) is moved into a locating slot (64) located on the second panel which receives the locating post; the enlarged head moved into the locating slot by moving the first panel in a first direction in a first line with the first and second panel in a first relative

Art Unit: 3637

position, and the slot is configured so that the enlarged head moved through the slot, shifting of the first panel relative to the second panel transverse to the first line to a second relative position causes the enlarged head to act against the second panel to thereby block movement of the enlarged head out of the slot by movement of the first panel parallel to the first line oppositely to the first direction. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the locating posts and slots to join any one of the panels to one another, as taught by Bains, modifying the securable enclosure disclosed by McNown, thus allowing the joining of the panels quickly and tightly with a joint that is uniform and tight along its complete length and stays tight when subjected to movement (Bains: col. 1, lines 45-59). In specific regards to claim 21, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ third and fourth connector parts, or any number of connector parts, to releasably connect any panel to one another, including the bottom panel to one of the side panels, on the securable enclosure, since it has been held that mere duplication of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art. *St. Regis Paper Co. v. Bemis Co.*, 193 USPQ 8 (CA7 1977).



Art Unit: 3637

14. Claims 22-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNown and Marcum. McNown discloses a securable enclosure (Figs. 1-5) in an assembled state to bound a storage space accessible through a front opening (A), the securable enclosure comprising: a plurality of panels (2, 3, 5); a first connector part (1) fixedly attached to one of the panels; and a second connector part (4), being a clip body, fixedly attached to another of the panels, the first and second connector parts releasably connected, each to the other, without requiring any additional separate parts to releasably maintain the one and the another panels together with the securable enclosure in the assembled state, wherein the first and second connector parts are releasable from each other by accessing and repositioning at least one of the first and second connector parts from within the storage space. McNown does not expressly disclose a securable enclosure wherein the one of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel substantially first surface includes a first flange with a flat surface that is angularly disposed to the first surface, the another of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel and rear panel second flat surface includes a second flange with a flat surface that is angularly disposed to the second surface, and with the securable enclosure in the assembled state, the flat surface on the first flange is facially abutted to the flat surface on the second flange, wherein at least one of the first and second connector parts extends fully through the first flange to connect the other of the first and second connector parts; wherein the first flat surface is substantially orthogonal to the second flat surface; wherein the first and second flanges each have an opening therethrough to accommodate the first and second connector parts. Marcum teaches a securable enclosure (Figs. 1-8) wherein the top panel (60) has a substantially flat first surface with a first flange (62) with a flat surface that is angularly disposed to the first surface,

Art Unit: 3637

the side panel having a substantially flat second surface with a second flange (42) with a flat surface angularly disposed to the second surface, and with the securable enclosure in the assembled state, the flat surface on the first flange is facially abutted to the flat surface on the second flange, wherein the first and second flanges each have an opening (44, 54) therethrough to accommodate a connector part (C) connecting the top and side panel flanges to one another. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ flanges one of the top, first side, second side and rear panel having all of the attributes taught by Marcum, modifying the securable enclosure disclosed by McNown, thus providing an easily assembled and dissembled securable enclosure (Marcum: col. 1 line 39 to col. 2, line 27).

15. Claims 26 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNown and Marcum as applied to claim 22 above, and further in view of Hill. McNown and Marcum disclose a securable enclosure having all of the elements stated previously. McNown and Marcum do not expressly disclose a securable enclosure wherein the first connector part comprises a clip body and the second connector part comprises a repositionable lock hook that is releasably connected to the clip body and wherein the first and second connector parts are releasably biasably connected to each other. Hill teaches a securable enclosure (Figs. 1-5) wherein a top panel (13) is releasably connected to a side panel (11) by a plurality of first (41) and second (29) connector parts, connected to each other without requiring any additional separate parts; wherein the first connector part comprises a clip body and the second connector part comprises a repositionable lock hook that is releasably biasably held connected to the clip body. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention

Art Unit: 3637

was made to employ the first and second connector parts acting on the top and side panels as taught by Hill, modifying the first and second connector parts of the securable enclosure disclosed by McNown, thus providing a conveniently engaging connector means that serves as a stiffener for the top panel and exact placement of the top panel is not necessary and hence rapid installation of the top panel is facilitated (Hill: col. 1, lines 30-37).

16. Claims 28-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNown and Marcum as applied to claim 22 above, and further in view of Bains. McNown and Marcum disclose a securable enclosure having all of the elements stated previously. McNown and Marcum do not expressly disclose a securable enclosure wherein a first of the panels has a locating post fixed thereon and another of the panels has a locating slot thereon to receive the locating post with the securable enclosure in the assembled state; wherein the locating post comprises a neck with an enlarged head on the neck, the enlarged head is moved into the locating slot by moving the first panel in a first direction in a first line with the first and another panels in a first relative position, and the slot is configured so that the enlarged head moved through the slot, shifting of the first panel relative to the another panel transverse to the first line to a second relative position causes the enlarged head to act against the another panel to thereby block movement of the enlarged head out of the slot by movement of the first panel parallel to the first line oppositely to the first direction. Bains teaches a panel joint for a securable enclosure (Figs. 1-8) for first (14) and second (16) panels applicable to both right angle and in-line panel joints wherein the first panel has a locating post (40) fixed thereon comprising a neck (42) with an enlarged head (46) is moved into a locating slot (64) located on the second panel which receives the locating post; the enlarged head moved into the locating slot by moving the first panel in a

Art Unit: 3637

first direction in a first line with the first and second panel in a first relative position, and the slot is configured so that the enlarged head moved through the slot, shifting of the first panel relative to the second panel transverse to the first line to a second relative position causes the enlarged head to act against the second panel to thereby block movement of the enlarged head out of the slot by movement of the first panel parallel to the first line oppositely to the first direction. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the locating posts and slots to join any one of the panels to one another, as taught by Bains, modifying the securable enclosure disclosed by McNown and Marcum, thus allowing the joining of the panels quickly and tightly with a joint that is uniform and tight along its complete length and stays tight when subjected to movement (Bains: col. 1, lines 45-59).

17. Claim 31 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNown and Hill. McNown discloses a securable enclosure (Figs. 1-5) in an assembled state to bound a storage space accessible through a front opening (A), the securable enclosure comprising: a plurality of panels (2, 3, 5); a first connector part (1) fixedly attached to one of the panels; and a second connector part (4), being a clip body, fixedly attached to another of the panels, the first and second connector parts releasably connected, each to the other, without requiring any additional separate parts to releasably maintain the one and the another panels together with the securable enclosure in the assembled state, wherein the first and second connector parts are releasable from each other by accessing and repositioning at least one of the first and second connector parts from within the storage space. McNown does not expressly disclose a securable enclosure wherein the first connector part comprises a clip body and the second connector part comprises a repositionable lock hook that is releasably connectable to the clip body, the another

Art Unit: 3637

of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel and rear panel having a substantially flat surface to which the second connector part is mounted, the flat surface residing in a reference plane, the repositionable lock hook is pivotably attached to a housing and the housing is pivotable relative to another of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel about an axis that is substantially parallel to the reference plane between a) a first position wherein the repositionable lock hook can be connected to the clip body and b) a second position wherein the repositionable lock hook is urged so as to biasably urge the one and the another of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel against each other. Hill teaches a securable enclosure (Figs. 1-5) wherein a top panel (13) is releasably connected to a side panel (11) by a plurality of first (41) and second (29) connector parts, connected to each other without requiring any additional separate parts; wherein the first connector part comprises a clip body and the second connector part comprises a repositionable lock hook that is releasably biasably held connected to the clip body, wherein the side panel has a substantially flat surface to which the second connector part is mounted. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the first and second connector parts acting on the top and side panels as taught by Hill, modifying the first and second connector parts of the securable enclosure disclosed by McNown, thus providing a conveniently engaging connector means that serves as a stiffener for the top panel and exact placement of the top panel is not necessary and hence rapid installation of the top panel is facilitated (Hill: col. 1, lines 30-37).

Art Unit: 3637

Conclusion

18. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Murray et al. teach a securable enclosure having first and second connector parts joining a plurality of panels to one another; Beehler teaches a securable enclosure wherein the top panel connected to a side panel having first and second connector parts that are biasably urged to one another, one having a clip body, the other a repositionable lock hook; Paschke teaches a securable enclosure having a connector joining the bottom panel to the side panels; and Seevers teaches a connector having two parts for joining panels at various angularly relations having a repositionable hook acting with a clip body.

19. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John P. Fitzgerald whose telephone number is (703) 305-4851. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lanna Mai, can be reached on (703) 308-2486. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703)-872-9302 before final action, and (703) 872-9327 after final action. Any inquiry of a general nature relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-1113.



JF

06/09/2003

LANNA MAI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600

